



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

April, 2008

Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The season is turning fast and by the time you read this it will officially be spring. I hope you got to participate in one or more Christmas Bird Counts. This year there were 70 conducted in Tennessee, up one from last year. Thanks to Steve Stedman for collecting our records and sending them to American Birds for publication. The TOS Winter meeting on Kentucky Lake was fun. If you missed it, think about joining us next year (see article inside). We were already making plans for where we could meet next winter, like Reelfoot or Hiwassee Refuge.

One thing on my to-do list at this time of year is to turn in my personal bird records from the winter to my regional compiler, and thus be included in the Season Report in *The Migrant*. I encourage you to do the same. And be sure to send reports of special and unusual sightings to Dean Edwards and the Tennessee Bird Records Committee.

I continue to be amazed by technology! Take for example the near-instantaneous reports to TnBird, our modern equivalent of the old Birding Hot Line. If you are alert, you can see a reported rare bird within a few hours, or certainly the same day. On the national level there is eBird with birding information from across the country at your fingertips. Many of you participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count in February, and it was fascinating to watch the little red dots of reports pile up. I guarantee you I was not the first on my block to get a computer, or "go digital", but now I love it. Email and computer technology has changed the way we do business, mostly for the better. I recently sat down to research past recipients of the TOS Distinguished Service Awards, and used Search feature with my digital *Migrant* collection. Again, I was amazed at the access of information at your fingertips. Thanks to Chris Welsh and others that helped to bring the *Migrant* into the digital age.

Of course the Spring Meeting is coming up in Memphis (see inside). The last weekend in April should be a good time to be in west TN with migration at its peak. And it's an opportunity to visit with folks from across the state, and to get much of our business done for the year.

"Spring Field Days", I have always liked the old term for our Spring Bird Counts. Most are held earlier but some clubs combine their SBC with International Bird Migration Day, the 2nd Saturday in May. This year, over Memorial Day weekend, Polk County Foray organized by David Vogt and by Laura Mitchell of the US Forest Service, will be a good chance to do some birding in the mountains of SE TN (see inside). If you are not conducting your own, volunteer to help someone on their Breeding Bird Survey route. There are always plenty of opportunities to get out and count birds at this time of year.

Later in the year look for notice from TOS Conservation Research Funding Committee. The CRFC is back up and running and will be accepting funding requests for Tennessee bird study projects. And if you are conducting a research project, the Fall Paper Session is the place to present your findings. Look for notice of that later in the summer also.

Enjoy the Spring! See you in Memphis!
Richard Connors

2008 Annual Spring Meeting Memphis, Tennessee April 25 - 27, 2008

The 2008 TOS Spring Meeting will be held in Memphis from Friday, April 25 through Sunday, April 27. The Memphis chapter is hosting the meeting. Registration Friday evening will be held at the Plantation Oaks Suites & Inn, 6656 Hwy 51N, 3 miles south of Millington. The Saturday business meeting will be held at the Admiralty Inn, 8181 Hwy 51N, in Millington. Dinner and program Saturday evening will be held at Meeman-Shelby State Park, 910 Riddick Road, Millington. To reach the hotel from 1-40, take exit 24B (Millington/Hwy 385) to Millington. Go 16 miles, turn left (south) on Hwy 51N. The hotel will be 2.2 miles on the left. For additional information, contact Dick Preston: dickpreston@bigriver.net.

Lodging:

A block of rooms at the Plantation Oaks Inn is being held for TOS. Rate is \$69.95 per night. Reservations may be made toll free: 888-422-1459; e-mail: plantation@bigriver.net. Website: www.admiraltyinns.com. Anyone wishing to use the bunkhouses at the State Park should contact Dick Preston directly.

Field Trips:

Trips will be held Saturday and Sunday mornings. Destinations will include Shelby Forest, Shelby Farms (Penal Farm), including the Mid-South Raptor Center, The Earth Complex (Pits) and Hatchie NWR.

Program Speaker:

David Ziolkowski Jr. is a program biologist for the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) at Patuxant Wildlife Research Center, Maryland. He is one of the two coordinators for the BBS conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey. David will speak on the BBS effort in Tennessee and discuss current trends among Tennessee birds.

Registration and Dinner:

The registration fee is \$10. Saturday dinner and program is \$18.00. When registering, indicate your choice for dinner: (1) Prime Rib; (2) BBQ platter or (3) Vegetarian. We MUST have your choice by April 18.

Send checks to: Memphis Chapter TOS, care of Carolyn Bullock, 1914 Poplar Ave, Apt 1016, Memphis, TN 38104-7642.

Schedule:

Friday, April 25

6:00 PM - Plantation Oaks Inn - Registration, refreshments, announcements and field trip sign-up.

Saturday, April 26

7:00 AM - 12 Noon. Field trips depart from the Plantation Oaks Inn.

12 Noon - 1:30 PM - Lunch

Business Meeting - Admiralty Inn, Millington.

2 PM - Committee Meetings

3 - 5 PM - Board of Director's Meeting

6:30 PM - Dinner and Program. The Group Lodge at Meeman-Shelby State Park (Shelby Forest).

Sunday, April 27

7:00 AM - Field trip departs from Plantation Oaks Inn.

Tennessee Ornithological Society Winter Meeting February 8, 9 & 10, 2008 Henry & Benton Counties, TN

TOS members from across Tennessee, with 3 Kentucky folks and one TOS member from Florida, made up the group of twenty-nine birders participating in the TOS weekend on Kentucky Lake. Our base was the comfortable facilities of Paris Landing State Park Inn. Birding areas were Paris Landing State Park, Pace Point and Britton Ford. Saturday weather was about ideal for February with sunny skies and light winds. Few rarities were found but clear air and good light meant that good looks were had of most of the species seen. One highlight was a long, "30 minute glimpse" of a distant soaring Golden Eagle. Good looks at Barred Owl, Bald Eagle, Pintail, Redhead & Ring-necked ducks, Snow, Ross's & Greater White-fronted geese, good rafts of Canvasbacks and innumerable American Coots. Loon numbers were noticeably low, with only Common Loon seen.

The Britton Ford area was re-visited on Sunday with several species added to the weekend list. Sunday highlights included Lesser Black-backed Gull, scope views of Red-headed Woodpecker, and 2 early Tree Swallows. On Sunday afternoon the remaining small group of birders found a 1st year male White-winged Scoter at Eva Beach recreation area, Nathan Bedford Forest State Park. List count was 85 species on Saturday, with 9 more added on Sunday. Ninety-four species is not a bad total for a Tennessee winter outing.

Many thanks to TOS member Mike Todd for leading and acting as local guide. His knowledge of the area and area birds helped make it a successful weekend.

Richard Connors
Nashville



TOS group at Britton Ford, TN NWR



TOS group at Pace Point, TN NWR



TOS group at TN NWR

J.B. Owen Award to Support Breeding Bird Survey in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

The Knoxville Bird Club has selected Keith Watson of the Southern Appalachian Bird Conservancy (Sevierville) to receive the 2007 J.B. Owen Award of \$500 for support of the *Breeding Bird Survey of Soak Ash and Cattail Wetland Habitats in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee*. The Park desires to obtain this breeding bird survey to assess occurrence and changes in breeding bird occupation and richness during wetland restoration programs. This need is in conjunction with the Park's implementation plan for invasive species removal at these sites and goals identified in the Avian Conservation Implementation Plan developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with the Park. Objectives of this breeding bird survey include: providing a listing and relative abundance of breeding bird species occurring in each of these wetland areas; identifying breeding birds of special conservation concern to Park management and North American Bird Conservation Initiative partners; providing recommendations for future wetland restoration related to bird habitat conservation.

Keith Watson's project provides an outstanding opportunity to achieve the Owen Award goal of promoting the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee.

Previous Owen Award winners were:

- 2002: Foothills Land Conservancy of Maryville, Tennessee, for acquisition of wetlands in the area between the Yuchi and Hiwassee Island Refuges.
- 2003: Jennifer Powers, of East Tennessee State University, for support of graduate research on the reproductive success and natal dispersal of American Kestrels.
- 2004: Samuel deMent of Greenwood, SC, David Vogt of Chattanooga, and Keith Hobson of Saskatoon, SK Canada for support of the project on Stable-isotope feather analysis and foreign band encounter comparisons of wintering American Kestrels in similar habitats west and east of the Southern Appalachians.
- 2005: Lyn Bales for support of outreach programs at Ijams Nature Center of Knoxville.
- 2006: Jim Giocomo for support of the project on Northern Saw-whet Owl Monitoring in Knox County, Tennessee; and Mark Armstrong for support of The MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity Station) at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge.

The J.B. Owen Award is open to anyone with a project that promotes the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee. Information on applying for the Award can be found in this issue of the *Warbler* or at www.tnbirds.org.

Marie Oakes, Knoxville Bird Club

J.B. OWEN MEMORIAL AWARD

The purpose of the J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment is to honor the memory of J.B. Owen, longtime TOS member known to thousands in East Tennessee through his columns in Knoxville newspapers. J.B. Owen was an active member of Knoxville Chapter from 1947 until his death in 2001. He was awarded the TOS Distinguished Service Award in 1990. The Endowment provides funds for the annual J.B. Owen Award, with expected value of \$250 to \$500 per year.

The J.B. Owen Award is open to anyone with a project that promotes the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee. Applicants are encouraged to submit:

- Cover letter with short project description and applicant contact information
- Resume
- Brief project proposal, of up to three pages, showing topic of the project, problem to be addressed, objectives, expected results and significance, deliverables (for example, written report, journal article, presentation), project location, and project schedule.

Each year, applications are due by May 1 and should be sent (preferably) by e-mail to marieoakes@msn.com or mailed to Marie Oakes, 18 Rockingham Lane, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830. The J.B. Owen Endowment Committee of KTOS will evaluate applications and will typically announce the Award winner the following September.

Marie Oakes, Knoxville Bird Club

CONSERVATION POLICY COMMITTEE

Support of “America’s Climate Security Act”

During mid-November, 2007, TOS wrote letters to Tennessee Senators Alexander and Corker, urging their active support of S. 2191, “America’s Climate Security Act” (ACSA). Rationale for support included:

1. There is strong scientific evidence that climate change is ecologically dangerous and is proceeding faster than many scientists had earlier predicted.
2. ACSA is projected to reduce total U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions by as much as 19% below the 2005 level (4% below the 1990 level) in 2020 and by as much as 63% below the 2005 level in 2050.
3. ACSA would provide forty percent of the funding from this legislation to be spent for comprehensive programs to remediate impacts from climate change to all fish and wildlife species.
4. ACSA would provide state wildlife funding of 10% education and 10% recreation, including possible wildlife viewing areas, providing learning while viewing opportunities.

During late November, 2007, TOS signed onto a similar letter from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to all U.S. Senators in support of ACSA, as detailed at <http://www.teaming.com/action/climate/>.

Bob Hatcher, Co-Chair
TOS Conservation Policy Committee

Attention Chapter Presidents:

Call for Nominations for TOS Distinguished Service Award

Each Year TOS endeavors to find and award deserving person or persons whose contribution to TOS goes above and beyond the norm.

Quote from Ron Hoff who chaired the first awards committee in 1990:

“... for long-standing TOS members who, over the years, have made significant contributions to the birdlife of Tennessee and/or to the state organization. The intent of this award is to formally say ‘thank you’ to some of the people who have put in countless hours for various activities that have helped our birds...”

Nominations are usually made by Chapter presidents, with nominees coming from the membership, but don't forget our at-large members. Nominees are described in a letter sent to the Awards Committee via TOS President RHC (for now... committee to be determined). The Committee will need to know the ornithological history of the individual with list of accomplishments.

Please think of the most deserving “unsung heroes” among your members and we will try to acknowledge their contributions, give our thanks, and award the gold Mockingbird pin to them at the state meeting. Nominations should be submitted before April 15th to be considered this year.

Richard Connors

CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA DUE

Data for the recent 2007/2008 Christmas Bird Count season is due. All Tennessee bird counts should have the following data included with the bird statistics:

1. Miles and hours by foot, car, and other modes (canoe, horse, etc.) for each party.
2. Miles and hours for each night-birding (owling) party are kept separately.
3. Feeder-watching hours are also kept separately; include names of feeder-watchers.
4. All count day weather data: temps; wind; precipitation; clouds, storms/fronts.
5. Please include the starting and ending times of the count.
6. Please include the number of observers, number of field parties, and names of all observers. For example, one person in a car is one observer in one party; 4 people in another car are 4 observers in one party; this example results in 5 observers in 2 parties.
7. Please send the data to Ron Hoff, 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN 37716. Email is acceptable at aves7000@bellsouth.net. I would like to have the data sometime in the first month after the count. This allows timely reporting to *The Migrant* editor.

Thanks for your efforts to continue monitoring Tennessee's birdlife. Your time and skills are very much appreciated.

Ron Hoff, TOS state count compiler

CHAPTER NEWS

GREENEVILLE CHAPTER - Although waterfowl numbers were somewhat disappointing this winter, the period produced a number of notable Greene County records for a wide variety of species.

Gadwall and Northern Shoveler numbers were generally high despite the scarcity of many other ducks, and Redhead, never a common winter species, was observed on 12 January. A Great Egret was observed on 19 January, followed by an Osprey a day later. Peregrine Falcons were seen at two sites in December. A Virginia Rail was heard at Wal-Mart Distribution Center on 8 December, providing a rare winter record for the species. February marked the 44th consecutive month that Eurasian Collared-Dove has been found at a site in the western portion of the county. Loggerhead Shrikes were seen at five sites in December and January, and Common Ravens were seen at three low-elevation sites during the period. Brown Thrashers were observed at two sites in January and February. An Orange-crowned Warbler, a very rare winter find, was observed at Wal-Mart Distribution Center on 24 February. A Vesper Sparrow was seen on 6 January, and a Fox Sparrow was present in Greeneville regularly in January and February. Lapland Longspur, always a noteworthy find, was heard on 6 January.

Greeneville birders were saddened to learn that two long-time members of the chapter—Juanita and Lenard Heckert—planned to relocate to Michigan in early spring. Their cordiality and cheerful presence at club events will be much missed. We wish them the best in their new home.

Don Miller

Four **MEMPHIS CHAPTER** members compiled 5 Christmas Bird Counts in the Memphis area. More than 50 observers participated and recorded a cumulative total of 135 species. Numbers of waterfowl, raptors and winter finches were up over recent years.

Member Knox Martin, director of the Mid-South Raptor Center, reported a Northern Saw-whet Owl was severely injured in a collision with a car and brought to the Center. This was the first Saw-whet reported in Shelby County in more than 20 years. Unfortunately,

it succumbed to its injuries. On a happier note, a Bald Eagle that suffered a broken wing in an altercation with another eagle, was successfully rehabilitated by Knox. Appropriately, he was able to release the bird at Reelfoot Lake following the Eagle Festival weekend in February.

Members approved a motion to renew support in 2008 with a contribution of \$300 for the MTOS sponsored MoSi station located in Panama. The contribution will be matched with \$350 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. MoSi, or Monitorio de Sobrevivencia Internal, is Spanish for Monitoring Overwintering Survival. The MoSi bird banding stations in the Caribbean and Central America collect data on the winter range and survival of tropical and Neotropical land bird species. The goal is to provide data that can be used to ensure the long-range survival of Neotropical land birds.

Members were saddened by two recent deaths. Memphis TOS member Tina Carpenter passed away on November 2. Franklin McCamey, a long-time Memphian and protégé of Ben and Lula Coffey, died December 25. He was a Lifetime TOS member.

Recent meetings featured presentations on "Migration", "Why Birds Sing", "Song Bird Rehabilitation" and member reports on "Birding the Dry Tortugas" and "Birding Papua New Guinea". Chapter members also presented 10 programs on birds to area civic groups and organizations, reaching over 800 children and adults.

Dick Preston & Margaret Jefferson

KNOXVILLE CHAPTER – We have 5 members in their 50th+ year as a member of the KTOS and I would like to recognize them.

They are:

- Nancy Tanner member since 1940
- Frances Owen 1947
- Elizabeth French 1954
- Johneta L. Smith 1954
- George W. and Maryrose McGown 1958

Mark Campen

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June 30th Deadline

The deadline date for the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is June 30th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:

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